

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

August 9, 2019

President Donald J. Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

We write to ask that you prioritize the release of Mr. Xiyue Wang, an American citizen unjustly imprisoned at Evin Prison in Iran for three years.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Wang is a University of Washington alumnus and Princeton University graduate student who traveled to Iran in May 2016 to pursue language studies and dissertation research. He was arrested in August 2016 and subsequently wrongly convicted of two counts of espionage and sentenced to 10 years in prison under Iranian Criminal Code.<sup>2</sup> August 6, 2019 marked three years of imprisonment for Mr. Wang.

Mr. Wang obtained a visa for travel to Iran to continue his language studies and conduct dissertation research on the 19th and 20th century Qajar dynasty. His research plan was approved by Iranian authorities, who also granted him authorization to access the national archives. He did not engage in any political activities or social activism and has no connections to U.S. government or intelligence agencies.<sup>3</sup> In fact, the documents he was asking for were neither classified nor related to contemporary politics. Most were newspaper clippings from between 1880 and 1921, material that was originally published in the public domain.<sup>4</sup>

Mr. Wang's case has drawn significant international media attention. The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has concluded that the government of Iran had "no legal basis for the arrest and detention" of Mr. Wang, that Iran committed "multiple violations" of his right to a fair trial and that he should be released "immediately."<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, Mr. Wang has faced multiple ailments as a result of his imprisonment, ranging from skin rashes and migraines to arthritis in his knee.<sup>6</sup> For two years he shared a cell with Nizar Zakka, a U.S. permanent resident who was also wrongly sentenced to prison in Tehran for 10 years. Mr. Zakka, who was released from prison in June 2019, confirmed that not only did Mr. Wang suffer from a skin

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.princeton.edu/node/91351>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.princeton.edu/news/2018/09/10/un-committee-calls-immediate-release-princeton-graduate-student-imprisoned-iran>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.princeton.edu/node/91351>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-threat-of-war-brings-new-fears-to-an-american-hostage-in-iran>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/10/world/middleeast/iran-xiyue-wang.html>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-threat-of-war-brings-new-fears-to-an-american-hostage-in-iran>

disease, but it took the prison months to procure the correct medicine for him.<sup>7</sup> Your White House,<sup>8</sup> Secretary of State Mike Pompeo,<sup>9</sup> Washington Governor Jay Inslee<sup>10</sup> and other U.S. officials have highlighted Mr. Wang's plight on various occasions. His case has also been the subject of several Congressional Resolutions.

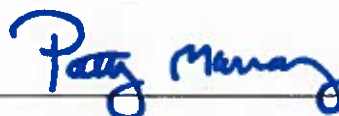
We appreciate the Administration's work to release Americans wrongly imprisoned around the world. As Mr. Wang's home country, the United States has the obligation to use every legal and diplomatic tool available to bring him home. We urge you to immediately resume direct and consistent diplomatic dialogue and take action to bring Mr. Wang home to his wife and six-year-old child.

We thank you for your prompt attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,



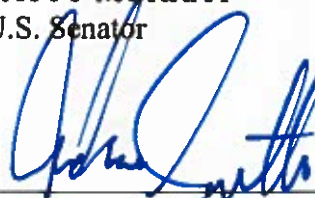
PRAMILA JAYAPAL  
Member of Congress



PATTY MURRAY  
U.S. Senator



MARIA CANTWELL  
U.S. Senator



ADAM SMITH  
Member of Congress



RICK LARSEN  
Member of Congress



SUZAN DELBENE  
Member of Congress

<sup>7</sup>

[https://apnews.com/671f4534f8c3464ca60c8d1284e93e0c?utm\\_campaign=SocialFlow&utm\\_medium=APMiddleEast&utm\\_source=Twitter](https://apnews.com/671f4534f8c3464ca60c8d1284e93e0c?utm_campaign=SocialFlow&utm_medium=APMiddleEast&utm_source=Twitter)


<sup>8</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/statement-american-citizens-unjustly-detained-iran/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://patch.com/new-jersey/princeton/princeton-student-imprisoned-iran-innocent-pompeo-says>

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2019/03/12/family\\_of\\_americans\\_held\\_in\\_iran\\_push\\_for\\_trump\\_meeting\\_139718.html](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2019/03/12/family_of_americans_held_in_iran_push_for_trump_meeting_139718.html)

  
DENNIS HECK  
Member of Congress

  
DEREK KILMER  
Member of Congress

  
KIM SCHRIER  
Member of Congress

Cc: Secretary of State Mike Pompeo